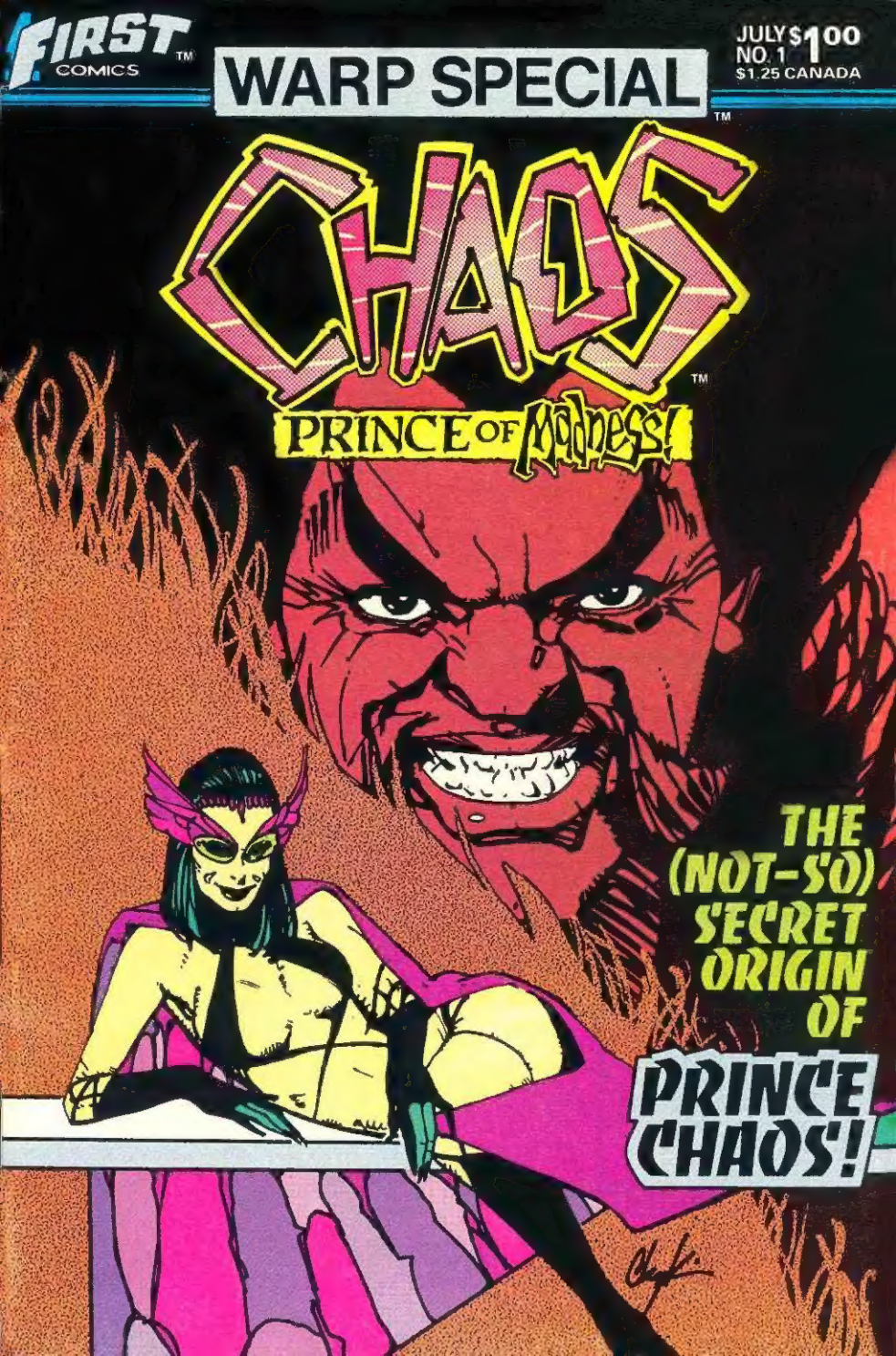
FIRST COMICS™
JULY $1.00
NO. 1
$1.25 CANADA

WARP SPECIAL™

CHAOS™

PRINCE OF Madness!



THE (NOT-SO) SECRET ORIGIN OF PRINCE CHAOS!

FIRST™ NOTES

A SERIOUS EDITORIAL, HONEST

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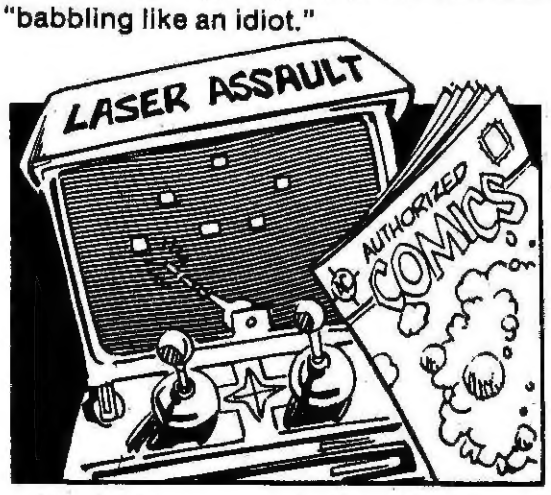
Before I continue, I'd like to make a few things clear: First Comics does not do any work with any video game manufacturers, nor do we carry any advertising from such companies. Not that we wouldn't, we merely haven't. Yet. Indeed, we are in competition with video games: the dollars people spend on such entertainment could be spent on comic books, preferably First Comics comic books.

But the words of the Surgeon General bothered me. They still do. The words of the professional doomsayers — the psychologists and so-called educators who denounce whatever it is that kids think is fun — bother me even more.

Several days later, I came across a tiny notice in the Boston GLOBE that said the surgeon general admitted he didn't know what he was talking about. More to the point, the Surgeon General said his comments were made off-the-cuff, without benefit of facts or studies. He merely said what seemed logical to him at the time. In our business, we call that "babbling like an idiot."



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As Rosanne Rosanadana used to say, it's always something. If it's not one thing, it's another. If it's not comic books, it's video games. Or movies. Or television. Or "violence" in general.

Three, maybe four generations of Americans were raised on Three Stooges movies — yet the hand-wringers believe it is the present generation of children that will be corrupted by them. Three generations of Americans were raised on Bugs Bunny cartoons, yet today "concerned citizens" believe they are bad for our youth. So Bugs Bunny cartoons, Three Stooges shorts and dozens of other entertainment experiences have been forced to go through censorship — scenes cut, works of art reduced to meaningless doilies.

When these people take up their battle, they start talking about levels of violence — today's children witness X hundreds of "acts of violence" per week. THEREFORE we must have less violent programming. We must SAVE THE CHILDREN.

Nonsense. The average child today "witnesses" far fewer "acts of violence" per week on television today than his counterpart did forty years ago, when his parents plopped him down at the movie theater for a Saturday matinee and saw a cartoon, a short, a chapter of a serial, and two movies — a four hour experience chock full of violence.

That generation grew up to be pretty healthy. My generation, raised on 1950s television, grew up pretty healthy. After thirty years, I think I can say with some certainty that rock and roll isn't destroying our children. The cartoons and movies that were good enough for their parents, their grandparents and their great grandparents are good enough for them.

Comic books do not breed juvenile delinquents. Video games do not breed abnormal children.

But I'll tell you just what — and who — is harming our nation's youth: The attitude that the responsibility for raising our children rests in the hands of someone other than the parents, That is what's harming our children. Parents who persist in blaming outside media (rock music, television, comics, video games); that is who's harming our children. Moronic or money-grubbing psychologists and their ilk who persist in writing books and appearing on television and radio talk shows and encouraging parents to go blame someone else; that is who's harming our children.

To quote a popular rock song: leave the kids alone.

End of serious editorial.

– Mike Gold

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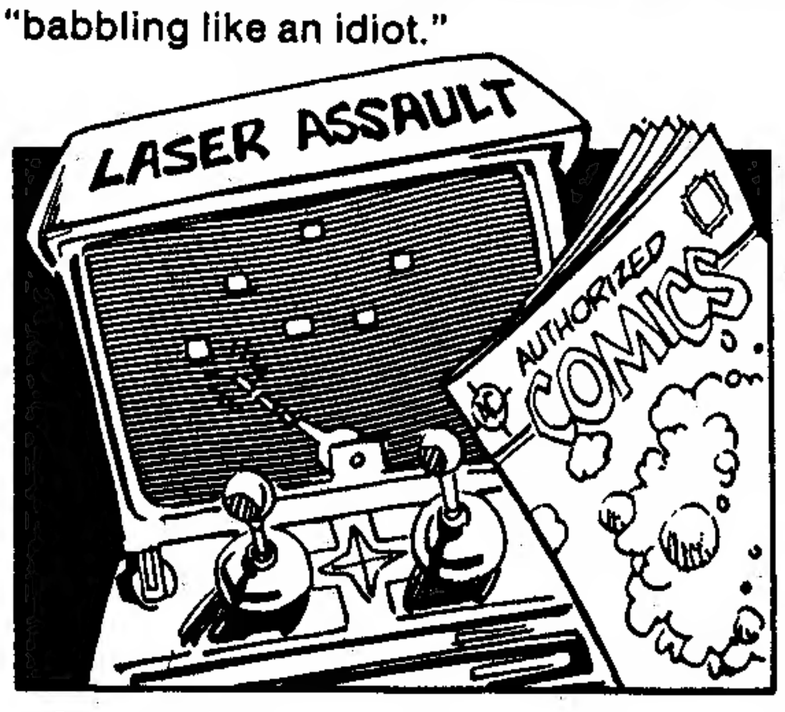

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PETER B. GILLIS STORY • HOWARD CHAYKIN PENCILS • GEORGE FREEMAN INKS/COLORS • JANICE CHIANG LETTERS • MIKE GOLD EDITOR

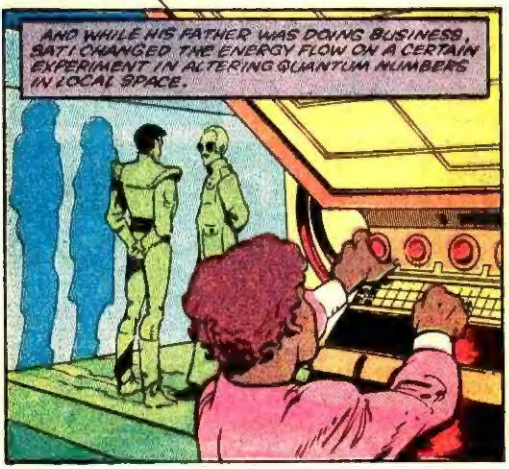
FEATURING CHARACTERS CREATED BY STUART B. GORDON & BURY ST. EDMUND

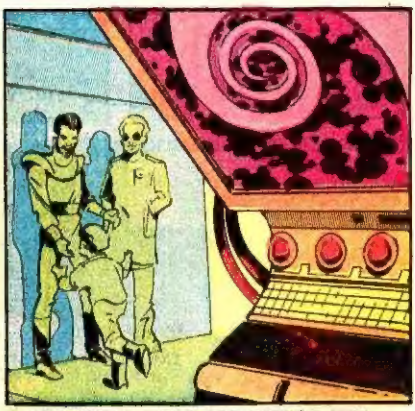
PART ONE:
A BEGINNING
THE PLANET SHATTUK, A DISTANT JEWEL IN AN ALIEN UNIVERSE:
TZARA, WHEN THE BABY COMES, WHAT SHOULD WE NAME HIM?
HIM, JARI? I WAS HOPING FOR A GIRL--
LOOK! A FALLING STAR!
MAKE A WISH, JARI--
WAIT! THAT'S NO METEORITE! IT'S SOMETHING ELSE--
AND IT'S HEADED RIGHT FOR US!
BUT BEFORE THE FEARFUL COUPLE CAN DO MORE THAN FLINCH, THE STAR-SEED EXPLODES--
--BATHING THEM IN A GENTLE SHOWER OF GLITTERING SPARKS.

WHATEVER IT WAS, TARZA, I TAKE IT AS A GOOD OMEN!
OUR CHILD WILL BE SOMETHING SPECIAL!
AND, WHEN JARI GAVE BIRTH TO SATI, THEIR SON, SHE WAS PROVED RIGHT--
--FOR ALL CHILDREN ARE SPECIAL--TO THEIR PARENTS.
ALTHOUGH TZARA AND JARI WERE TWO OF SHATTUK'S LEADING PHYSICISTS, THEY ALWAYS FOUND TIME FOR YOUNG SATI.
AND INDEED, IT SEEMED THAT SATI INHERITED HIS PARENTS' BRILLIANCE; LEARNING TO READ BEFORE HE COULD WALK

AND IT WAS ONLY NATURAL THAT TARZA AND JARI WOULD NURTURE THAT BUDDING INTELLECT.
YOU SEE, SATI, A GLUON IS A THING THAT HOLDS QUARKS TOGETHER. THEY COME IN COLORS, JUST LIKE CANDIES...
SO SATI GREW UP STRONG AND HAPPY. AND YET THERE WERE CERTAIN PECULIARITIES IN HIS BEHAVIOR:
MOMMY, CAN I GO OUT AND PLAY?
BUT SATI, NONE OF YOUR FRIENDS ARE AROUND. WHO'LL YOU PLAY WITH?
OH, JUST KAYO. HE'S AROUND.
ALL RIGHT THEN, RUN ALONG.
WHO'S THIS KAYO? I DON'T BELIEVE I KNOW THE NAME.
KAYO IS SATI'S IMAGINARY PLAYMATE. THE PSYCHIST SAID IT WAS QUITE NORMAL FOR CHILDREN WITH ACTIVE IMAGINATIONS.
BUT "KAYO" WAS ANYTHING BUT NORMAL--
ALL RIGHT, SATI, I'VE GOT A RIDDLE FOR YOU: SAY LAST NIGHT YOU HAD A DREAM THAT YOU WERE A BUTTERFLY. MIGHT IT NOT BE THAT TODAY--

--YOU ARE A BUTTERFLY DREAMING YOU ARE A BOY?
NOR DID "KAYO'S" ENIGMAS EVER LET UP--
--AND YOU MIGHT HAVE BEEN CREATED JUST THIS INSTANT WITH ALL FAKE MEMORIES OF THE PAST, AND NEVER REALLY KNOW!
GEE--!
--AND IT BEGAN TO SHOW!
DAD, IF GOD IS OMNIPOTENT, COULD HE MAKE A ROCK SO BIG HE COULDN'T LIFT IT?
WHY-- UH--
AND BEFORE LONG, THE STRANGE THOUGHTS TURNED TO STRANGE ACTIONS-- PUBLIC OUTRAGE AGAINST RATIONALITY--
THIS STATEMENT IS FALSE
--THAT ARE UNUSUAL IN A CHILD OF SIX.
HIS PLAYMATES RESPONDED WITH DERISIVE LAUGHTER-- AND AN ALIENATED BITTERNESS WAS ADDED TO SATI'S MAKEUP.
HIS PARENTS NOTICED NOTHING, FOR HIS ACADEMIC PROGRESS CONTINUED AT THE SAME RAPID PACE.
WELL, SATI, YOU'VE LEARNED ALL I CAN TEACH YOU ABOUT TENSORS AND SPINORS. YOU'RE READY FOR GENERALIZED MANIFOLDS--
OK, DAD...





THE WHOLE THING TOOK ONLY A FEW MINUTES FOR SOMEONE OF SATI'S BRILLIANCE.

AND SO, NOT LONG AFTERWARD--
BUT WHAT DO THESE READINGS MEAN, TZARA?
IT SOUNDS MAD, BUT SOMEHOW SHATTUK'S CORE HAS BECOME RADIOACTIVE! A CHAIN REACTION IS BUILDING THAT WILL TEAR THE PLANET APART!
HOW LONG DO WE HAVE? CAN WE ESCAPE?
ONLY MINUTES-- AN HOUR AT MOST, BELOVED JARI.
THE ONLY THING WE HAVE TIME FOR IS TO PLACE SATI IN THIS PROTOTYPE WARPSHIP. HE, AT LEAST, WILL LIVE.
AND AS THE PLANET SHATTUK EXPLODES, TORN APART BY ITS LAST SON, ONE LONE SHIP ESCAPES.
AND IN THAT SHIP, SATI REALIZES THAT LOSING HIS PARENTS IS, IN FACT, SOMETHING HE CAN HANDLE.
HIS TRIUMPHANT LAUGHTER MERGES WITH HIS IMAGINARY PLAYMATE'S.
THEY--HE-- WILL NEVER NEED ANYBODY EVER AGAIN.

PART TWO:
CYNOSURE
AT THE HEART OF A PANDIMENSIONAL VORTEX, BEYOND AND BETWEEN ALL SPACE, LIES THE CITY OF CYNOSURE.
A CRAZY-QUILT AGGLOMERATION BUILT BY A THOUSAND WILDLY DIFFERING RACES. CYNOSURE IS THE CROSSROADS TO EVERYWHERE.
A HUNDRED PLANES, A MILLION WORLDS TRADE IN THIS BUSTLING HUB, ACCESSIBLE BY WARP-GATE OR HYPERSHIP--
AND IT IS HERE, TO CYNOSURE, THAT THE INFAMOUS SHIP MALAPERTE MAKES ITS WAY!

THROUGH THE AIRLOCK STRIDES THE EVEN-MORE-INFAMOUS CAPTAIN OF THE MALAPERTE--CHAOS, PRINCE OF MADNESS!
YOU GO NOT MORE FARTHER, PRINCELING!
OH, MET WE HAVE, CHAOS. BOGOSTVO KNOWS YOU MUCH WELL!
YOU STOLE NOT TO REPLACE NESTING CRYSTAL FROM ME, CHAOS! MY FAMILY DIED OFF MOST!
REALLY? THAT'S ONE THAT SLIPPED MY MIND!
I DON'T BELIEVE WE'VE MET, MR.--?
BUT NOW MY NESTINGS AND I HAVE MORE GOOD REVENGE ON YOU SLIME, AT LAST!
SURELY YOU DON'T MEAN THESE COMICAL CREATURES?
NOT MUCH LAUGHS IN A MULTIPLE DISINTEGRATOR DISCHARGE, DOG!
GO AHEAD, FOOL! SEE IF YOUR WEAPONS DO ANY GOOD! I HAVEN'T HAD A LAUGH LIKE THIS IN SOME WHILE!
ASSUME STANCE FOR DYING, CHAOS PRINCELING!
YOU'LL LAUGH OUT OTHER SIDE OF BRAIN IN--EH?
HOLD A MOMENT, FRIEND--

YOU KNOW THE DOCKS ARE NEUTRAL ZONES, BOGOSTVO! AND CHAOS HAS COMMITTED NO CRIMES IN CYNOSURE--YET! SO LET'S NOT HAVE ANY AMBUSHES!
ALL GOOD! BUT YOU MORE BETTER WATCH STEP, CHAOS! YOU'VE GOT ENEMIES, AND THEY'LL LIKE MUCK KNOWING YOU'RE HERE!
ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE MYSELF!
I AM LORD CUMULUS, AND I WELCOME YOU TO CYNOSURE!
I TRY TO KEEP PEACE IN CYNOSURE--AND ELSEWHERE! I'M SURE WE'LL GET ALONG FINE IF YOU--
KEEP YOUR HANDS OFF ME!
ALL RIGHT.
CUMULUS IS ONLY MIFFED BY THE OUT-BURST--
--WHILE CHAOS IS PUZZLED AT THE VENEMENCE OF HIS OWN REACTION!

BUT THAT STRANGE INSTINCTIVE REPULSION IS SOON SUBMERGED IN THE SENSUAL ONSLAUGHT THAT IS CYNOSURE!
PRINCE CHAOS STRIDES ITS WALKWAYS, AND LIKES WHAT HE SEES!
WELL NOW! THIS MIGHT BE A NICE PLACE TO OWN--OR TO RULE!
AH! THIS ONE'S NICE, TOO!
WHAT'S SO NICE ABOUT HIM, MISTRESS?
I LIKE HIS BODY LANGUAGE, SYMAX!
AND THE SORCERESS VALARIA GETS WHAT SHE LIKES--!

TELEPORTATION BEAMS ARE INEFFECTIVE INSIDE CYNOSURE'S WALLS--
--SO A FIGURE MATERIALIZING ON A WALKWAY IS A STARTLING SIGHT!
HELLO, STRANGER! LOOKING FOR ANYTHING IN PARTICULAR?
--THE FUZZY APE WITH THE SCOWL IS SYMAX. HE CHANGES THE SHEETS. DO COME IN.
NO-- NOT ANY MORE
AH, MUSKFRUIT! I ONCE HELD A MONOPOLY ON THE MUSKFRUIT TRADE BY UNLEASHING THE WHITE PLAGUE THROUGHOUT THE STSO SYSTEM!
FASCINATING, MY PRINCE!
SPLUTTER! HEY! WHAT DID YOU--HOW--
OH, I KNOW ALL SORTS OF TRICKS, MY DEAR CHAOS--

I THOUGHT SOMETHING CLOSER TO YOUR GENOTYPE--
BUT I CAN BE-- MOST FLEXIBLE--
NOW COME, MY PRINCE--THE HOUR DRAWS ON AND FIRES SUCH AS OURS ARE NOT EASILY QUENCHED--
AS--OHHHH--
A THIN FILM OF SWEAT GLAZES THE TWO BODIES IN THE DIM LIGHT...
UNTIL AT LAST...
MY LITTLE VALARIA--I WANT YOU TO TELL ME--
ANYTHING...

...EVERYTHING YOU KNOW ABOUT THIS LORD CUMULUS...
AND SYMAX'S DERISIVE LAUGHTER SHAKES THE WALLS.
HAHAHA AHAHAHAHA
DAYS LATER, THE FIGURE OF LORD CUMULUS STRIDES DOWN A DESERTED HALL TO STAND BEFORE A CLOSED WARP-GATE.
THE AMULET AT HIS CHEST SHINES...
--AND THE GATE OPENS.
HAIL ZORUL RANGA! HOW FARES FEN-RA?
SO! LORD CUMULUS HAILS FROM FEN-RA, DOES HE?
AS EVER, LORD--MM--ER--CUMULUS!
THAT'S VERY INTERESTING, SYMAX! AND THERE'S A GATE TO FEN-RA ON CYNOSURE?
I HAVE SOME BITTER SCORES TO SETTLE WITH FEN-RA AND ITS WIZARD--!

MY PRINCE, THIS CUMULUS COMES FROM THE INACCESSIBLE CITY OF THE FIFTH PLANE, FEN-RA!
AH, YES! FEN-RA - A LEGENDARY CENTER OF COSMIC POWER. IT IS SAID THEY DENIED ME ENTRANCE ONCE--
SO HERE'S WHAT WE DO...
I'VE NEVER SEEN A DEVICE SUCH AS THIS, CHAOS!
THAT'S BECAUSE YOU HAVEN'T KNOWN ME! IT SHOULD DECODE THE LOCK AND PRY IT OPEN IN NO TIME!
THAT'S GOOD-- BECAUSE NO TIME IS WHAT YOU'VE GOT!
DAMN IT!
I'M SORRY, BUT THIS GATE MUST REMAIN CLOSED! OTHERWISE, THE UNIVERSAL BALANCE MIGHT BE DISRUPTED!

I'M SURE YOU UNDERSTAND.
KA-WHOOOM!
THIS SHOULD COVER THE FINE!
SINCE THIS IS A FIRST OFFENSE, I'LL LET YOU OFF EASY!
SEE YOU AROUND!
THAT SINKS IT! FOR THIS, FEN-RA WILL FALL, AND THAT POMPOUS FOOL WILL DIE!
SO, CAPTAIN ISENGRIM, WE HEAR YOUR CREW OF CUTTHROATS IS LOOKING FOR WORK!
TRUE, BLACK-O, BUT WE DON'T COME CHEAP.. OR WORK SMALL!

OH, I WOULDN'T SAY THE RAPE AND PLUNDER OF THE FABULOUS CITY OF FEN-RA IS WORKING SMALL!
GRANTED! WHAT'S PAY?
NOT SO FAST! YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH A LOT ISENGRIM--HOW DO I KNOW YOU'RE STILL GOOD IN A FIGHT?
I MAY HAVE LOST TWO OF FIVE EYES AND A FEW LEGS, PRINCE, BUT I'M STILL A MIND-SPIDER!
WE SPIN NERVE-WEBS INSTEAD OF SILK, AND THERE COURSES THROUGH IT THE STRONGEST NERVE-POISON THERE IS! IT CAN DESTROY ANY SENTIENT BEING!
I DIDN'T THINK YOU WOULD! BUT IT'S QUITE SIMPLE!
THE PRICE IS RIGHT, CHAOS, BUT I STILL DON'T SEE HOW WE'RE GOING TO GET THROUGH THAT GATE!
YOU'LL RECALL THAT CYNOSURE IS A MASS OF STRUCTURES HUNG TOGETHER IN A PAN-DIMENSIONAL VORTEX!
POISED VERY DELICATELY IN THE EYE OF THAT STORM, I MIGHT ADD!

ALL WE NEED DO IS SABOTAGE THE CENTRAL ANCHORING MECHANISM THAT HOLDS CYNOSURE
--AND THE VARIOUS STRUCTURES WILL DRIFT APART, TOWARD THE WALLS OF THE VORTEX!
NATURALLY THE MILLIONS LIVING IN CYNOSURE WILL BE IN DANGER OF A VERY GRUESOME DEATH--AND THE EMERGENCY ESCAPE SYSTEMS WILL BE ACTIVATED!

KLIK!
KLIK!
CLICK!
KLAK!
"SPECIFICALLY, EVERY WARP-GATE AUTOMATICALLY *OPENS* TO SERVE AS AN ESCAPE ROUTE!
--AND THAT *INCLUDES* THE GATE TO FEN-RA!
WHAT DID I TELL YOU--A LITTLE *MASS DEATH* DOES WONDERS!
AND NOW--ON TO FEN-RA!

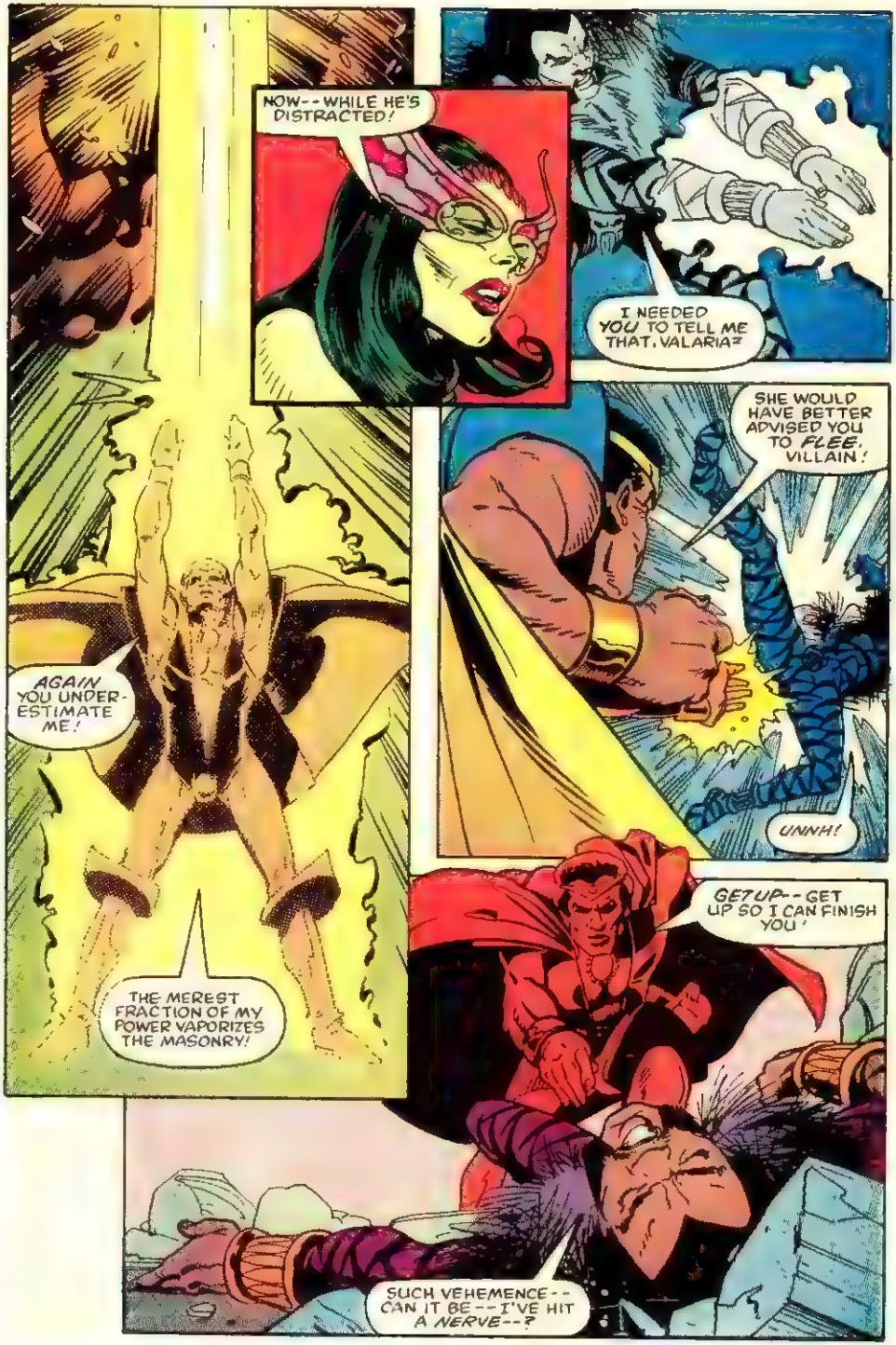
UP AHEAD SHOULD BE LUGUL BANDA'S PALACE-- YES! THERE ARE HIS FACELESS ONE GUARDS
I'LL ASK YOU LATER HOW YOU CAME BY THIS KNOWLEDGE, VALARIA.
NO ONE IS TO BE ADMITTED AT THIS TIME. THE WIZARD SAYS GO AWAY.
WE ARE ARMED
AND THEY ARE MASTERS OF UNDER-STATEMENT, MY PRINCE! TAKE CARE!
LIKE SO!
WHAM
NOT TO WORRY, MY DEAR INSECT QUEEN! I'VE COME EQUIPPED!
PLEASE, STOP.
WHO--?

I AM LUGULBANDA, AND YOU MUST BE PRINCE CHAOS! A *PITY* LORD CUMULUS ISN'T HERE--IT WOULD BE SO CONVENIENT--!
STOP BABBLING, OLD GOAT, AND *STAND ASIDE!*
BUT YOU CAN'T APPROACH *THE CRYSTAL!* IT'S THE HEART OF FEN-RA ITSELF! OH, DEAR--!
I WANT IT *ALL* AND I WANT IT-- *NOW!*
IF IT'S THE HEART OF FEN-RA, THEN I'LL *TAKE* IT AND *BREAK* IT!
I WANT YOUR *TREASURES*, OLD MAN--I WANT YOUR *KNOWLEDGE*--I WANT YOUR *POWER*--I WANT YOUR *AWE* AND *FEAR!* DO YOU HEAR?
I AM *CHAOS PRINCE OF MADNESS!*

ISENGRIM! CHAOS! SOMETHING'S HAPPENING!
WHEW!
CUMULUS!
SORRY, I'M LATE, REVERED ONE, BUT I HAD TO SAVE CYNOSURE!
SORRY, BUT THE FIRST DEAL IS MINE!
BUT NOW, MADMAN, I'LL DEAL WITH YOU!
BLAST HIM!
IT PAINS ME TO DO THIS, BUT YOU BRING IT ON YOURSELVES!
WATCH AS I GATHER YOUR OWN ENERGIES--

FEEL THEM TURNED BACK ON YOU--
--AND LEARN A MOST BITTER LESSON!
THAT WAS JUST TO SHOW YOU, CHAOS, THAT YOU'RE NOT FACING SOME WEAK-KNEED BOY!
YOU'RE FACING LORD CUMULUS, PROTECTOR OF FEN-RA!
THAT'S JUST AS I WANTED IT, BOY!
HAVE AT YOU, CUMULUS!

FOR MINE IS A GREATER POWER!
YOUR MACHINES CAN'T GIVE YOU POWER TO STAND AGAINST ME, CHAOS!
HAVEN'T YOU HEARD, CUMULUS? THERE AIN'T NO JUSTICE!
AT LEAST NOT WHILE I'M AROUND!
THERE! SAVE YOUR MASTER FROM A FALLING PALACE!
THE POWER OF JUSTICE -- TO MAKE YOU PAY FOR YOUR CRIMES!


NOW--WHILE HE'S DISTRACTED!
I NEEDED YOU TO TELL ME THAT, VALARIA?
SHE WOULD HAVE BETTER ADVISED YOU TO FLEE, VILLAIN!
UNNH!
AGAIN YOU UNDER-ESTIMATE ME!
THE MEREST FRACTION OF MY POWER VAPORIZES THE MASONRY!
GET UP--GET UP SO I CAN FINISH YOU!
SUCH VEHEMENCE--CAN IT BE--I'VE HIT A NERVE--?

AT THE KEY WORD 'NERVE' ISENGRIM ACTIVATES THE DEADLY NEURO-POISON IN HIS WEB--
--A WEB VERY CAREFULLY SPUN OVER PRINCE CHAOS'S COSTUME!
SURPRISE, CUMULUS! PREPARE TO DIE!
PRINCE CHAOS! PLEASE--DO NOT FIGHT CUMULUS!
YOU AND HE--ARE BROTHERS!
BROTHERS? GOOD--THAT KEEPS THIS IN THE FAMILY!
BY HE WHO DREAMS! THE LORD CUMULUS--IS DYING!
GIVE IT UP, CUMULUS! YOU HEARD THE MAN!
NOW, CUMULUS, NO MATTER HOW STRONG YOU ARE--
--THE NEURO-POISON WILL DRAIN ALL LIFE FROM YOU!
YES--
YES, PRINCE OF MADNESS. YOU MAY KILL ME--

--BUT YOU SHALL NOT CONQUER!
BY KATHULO!
YES, HE IS GONE, BUT IN DEATH HE HAS TRIUMPHED!
BUT AT WHAT A PRICE!
HE'S-- GONE!
WITH HIS DEATH--AND THE DESTRUCTION OF THE AMULET AT HIS BREAST--THE COSMIC CRYSTAL HAS GONE DARK! THE ENTIRE FIFTH PLANE IS NOW SEALED OFF FROM THE REST OF THE MYRIAD UNIVERSES! YOU ARE TRAPPED HERE FOREVER!

FACELESS ONES! BEFORE THEIR POWERS RETURN--CAST THEM INTO THE ABYSS BEYOND FEN-RA!
IT'S NOT THAT EASY, YOU OLD GEEZER! I'LL BREAK THE BARRIER--AND I'LL DESTROY YOU, JUST AS I DESTROYED CUMULUS! DO YOU HEAR ME?
"ONE DAY--ON SOME WORLD, IN SOME UNIVERSE OUTSIDE FEN-RA, THAT SEED SHALL TAKE ROOT, AND LORD CUMULUS SHALL BE BORN UNTO US AGAIN!"
"BUT EVEN WHEN THAT DAY ARRIVES, OUR CHAMPION SHALL STILL FACE A MOST FORMIDABLE ANTAGONIST--CHAOS, PRINCE OF MADNESS!
"BUT YET, EVEN IN THIS DISASTER THERE IS HOPE: FOR, DESPITE MY WORDS, THE AMULET WAS NOT DESTROYED--AND, THOUGH THIS LORD CUMULUS PERISHED, HE RELEASED IN DEATH A SHOWER OF STAR-SEEDS THROUGHOUT COSMIC INFINITY--STAR-SEEDS EVEN AS CHAOS ONCE WAS!"
the end.

HOWARD CHAYKIN'S

COMING FIRST COMICS IN JUNE!

ESPECIALLY warped words

%FIRST COMICS, 1014 DAVIS STREET, EVANSTON, ILLINOIS 60201

COMIC BOOKS HAVE ORIGINS, TOO!

Well, there you have it. The secret origin of Chaos — Prince of Madness.

Or so you think. Maybe you should look at it as "A" secret origin. After all, we *did* leave a few loose threads here and there.

Come to think of it, we also left a bit of blank space between the end of this story and the beginning of **Warp** #1. But more on that later.

I think a few comments concerning the evolutionary process are in order. As ardent fans of the Warp plays, "we" (those of us involved who saw the plays, namely Associate Editor Rick Oliver, Sargon-scripter John Ostrander, Art Director Joe Staton and yours truly) have been well aware for some time that there are essential differences between a series of plays and a series of comic books. By our standards, there were a couple of holes in the script you could drive a truck through.

So we had a meeting — "we" now being the aforementioned Messrs. Oliver and Ostrander, Warp scripter Peter Gillis (who's been spending more time with his copy of the Warp play scripts than he has with his medieval literature tomes, which is saying something), and yours still truly — and we discussed how we could fill a few of those holes.

The important questions became obvious:

1) Why was Chaos stuck in the Fifth Level?
2) How did Chaos get trapped in David Carson's body in the first place?
3) How did Chaos meet up with Valaria and Symax?

The resolution, we quickly decided, was to come up with a secret origin story. After all, it's a comic book tradition, isn't it?

But since we've already decided the beings we know as Cumulus and Chaos are more *concepts* than characters, we allowed for the fact that, somehow, there always was a Prince Chaos and there always was a Lord Cumulus. That is not to say that if you kill one off, he will somehow regenerate — the Red Skull's got that one sewn up. He may or he may not. And he might regenerate in a completely different form. Which brought up another interesting aspect of the Warp universe.

Some folks who saw the Warp plays in Minneapolis or during the 1979-1981 Chicago runs might wonder why we changed Cumulus from black to white. In point of fact, the original stage Cumulus — the four actors who played the character in Chicago, New York and Washington — was white. In our ongoing **Warp** comic book, we decided to keep the character as he was originally presented on the stage.

But the idea of a black Lord Cumulus was one that, in its own way, held our interest. So when we created a pre-David Carson Cumulus for this **Warp Special**, we decided to make him black — a tribute to (and out of respect for) the two fine actors who most recently played the role on stage.

And as you've seen from this issue's "origin" story, whereas we've chronicled the first meeting between Cumulus and Chaos, the story of *this* Lord Cumulus has yet to be told.

As you're already aware, we decided to throw in a touch of satire here and there, but essentially, what we've done is clear the stage for the original **Warp** story which has been going on these past four months.

We've *cleared* the stage, but we haven't quite finished *setting* it yet.

Between next month's battle between Xander and the denizens of the Fifth Level and the end of our adaptation of the plays — now tentatively scheduled for issue eight or nine, not counting our special epilogue — we are going to publish one more **Warp Special.** It won't necessarily be the last **Warp Special**, it'll just be the one that fills in the gap between **Warp Special** #1 and **Warp** #1. It'll deal with the, ah, falling out between Chaos and Valaria, and the, ah, possession of Symax and all sorts of things that led up to the original story.

Warp Special #2 will be written by Peter Gillis and pencilled, inked and colored by George Freeman, and it should be on sale in three or four months (Howard Chaykin will be quite busy writing and drawing his new monthly from First Comics, a strange saga called **American Flagg** that'll be premiering this June, where ever better comic books are sold). We're just plotting **Warp Special** #2 now, and let me tell you, we're real excited.

We hope you are, too.

REGARDING LETTERS OF COMMENT for this **Warp Special** — hey, you bet, we want to see them. And read them. And take their suggestions to heart. But first we've got to *get* them — and you can send *your* Warped Words to us at:

ESPECIALLY WARPED WORDS
c/o First Comics, Inc.
1014 Davis Street
Evanston, IL 60201

We will be happy to run the more interesting of them in this summer's **Warp Special** #2.

Of course, we'll be running the more interesting letters received on **Warp** #2 in next month's **Warp** #5. Speaking of which...

COMING NEXT MONTH: Warp #5 — "The Darkest Hour!" adapted and pencilled by **Frank Brunner**, scripted by **Peter Gillis** and inked by **Bruce Patterson.** Xander's got Cumulus and Chaos by the short hairs, to be polite, and it just might be possible Valaria's beginning to outlive her usefulness as well. Believe me, it really *is* their darkest hour.

And, we're beginning a new three-part series featuring Sargon — Mistress of War, written by **John Ostrander**, pencilled by **Lenin Delsol**, and inked by **Al Gordon.** It's called "The Dogs of War," and around here, we take that literally.

ALSO COMING NEXT MONTH ... since we've got your attention anyway: **E-Man** #5 (**Martin Pasko** and **Joe Staton** take us on a religious and psychological trip, aptly named "Getting Void"); **Jon Sable, Freelance** #3 (**Mike Grell** launches into his four-part origin story, which is *nothing* like that of Prince Chaos); and — tah-dahh! — **Starslayer** #7, now monthly, now published by First Comics! Written and brokendown by **Mike Grell** and pencilled by **Lenin** (Sargon, Mistress of War) **Delsol**, this issue resolves the oft-asked question "What do you do after you've trashed the entire world?"

And, on behalf of all of us here at First Comics, have a safe and happy April Fool's Day!

— Mike Gold

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AND HE'S HERE TO STAY!

MIKE GRELL

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